

Achieving Convergence for the Empowerment of Women

NORTHERN REGIONAL CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

**20-21 March 2012
Haryana Niwas, Chandigarh
Haryana**

PROCEEDINGS

The fifth regional conference for the northern states / UTs of Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Delhi and Chandigarh was organized by the National Mission for the Empowerment of Women in collaboration with the Department of Women and Child Development, Government of Haryana in Chandigarh on 20-21 March 2012. It was convened as the launching platform for the NMEW for the northern states and union territories to engage with a wide range of stakeholders to identify the key issues that need attention to garner the required support and cooperation from the participating State Governments/UT Administrations where the NMEW, along with state governments and national line ministries, can play a role in achieving the desired convergence.

The primary aim of the Conference was to provide a forum for the government and non-government stakeholders to share their visions, experiences on issues concerning women, and suggest strategies to coordinate multi-stakeholder actions for the promotion of gender equality and holistic empowerment of women.

The Conference was attended by 150 delegates including state government officers from the key departments such as Finance, Planning, Law, Health, Education, Labour, HRD, Agriculture, Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, chairpersons and representatives from the State Commissions for Women, academics, NGO and CBO representatives, A List of Participants is attached (Annex I).



The chief guest in the Conference was the Haryana Chief Minister Shri Bhupinder Singh Hooda while the Haryana Women and Child Development Minister Smt. Geeta Bhukkal presided over the function.

Inaugural Session

Shri S. S. Prasad, Financial Commissioner-cum-Principal Secretary Department of Higher Education and Principal Secretary In-charge, Women and Child Development Department welcomed the delegates and expressed his gratitude to the Hon'ble Chief Minister, Shri Bhupinder Singh Hooda for sparing his valuable time to inaugurate the two day conference.



He emphasized the commitment of the Government in promoting empowerment of women and stated that it is reflected in the budgetary allocation of women and child development department which increased from 132 crores in 2004-05 to 546 crores in 2011-12 as well as of the education department which increased from 220 crores to 892 crores during the same period. The Government acknowledges the pivotal role played by

education and has opened number of colleges in recent years to promote girl child education irrespective of caste, class and income. He also mentioned that the state of Haryana has the distinction of having the B.P.S Mahila Vishwavidyalaya in Sonapat which is the first ever women university in North India. The university has progressed by leaps and bounds since its commencement from August 2007, he added.

This was followed by the traditional lighting of the lamp.

Shri N. Sanyal, Additional Secretary and Mission Director of the National Mission for Empowerment of Women while indicating the structure of the Mission stressed on inter-sectoral convergence. He said that this is a Mission unique in nature as the mandate is to deal with government processes in a gender sensitive way. He informed the house about the initiation of the processes of NMEW which is an output of the recommendations of the Committee of Governors. He mentioned the status of the State Mission Authority (SMA) and of the State Resource Centre for Women (SRCW) in the country including that of Punjab and Haryana and said that while 18 states have notified the SMAs only 6 have set up the SRCWs. He urged the state government officers present on the occasion to take up the issue on a priority basis in their respective states / UTs and begin pilot projects which would aim towards the holistic empowerment of women. The full potential and strength of the Mission will only be realised with the active participation of the states. He focussed on issues like the

declining sex ratio, literacy of women, economic empowerment, labour force participation, and requested the participants to deliberate on such issues to devise a strategy.

Smt. Rashmi Singh, Executive Director of the National Resource Centre for Women elaborated on the National Mission for Empowerment of Women, its strategy approach and focus. She said that a common understanding is required for all before the National and State Mission starts working in its full strength. Today the problem is exclusion amongst plenty and the need of the hour is to focus on intra and inter-sectoral/ departmental convergence and coordination to provide women with a life of dignity and self-confidence she stressed. Until social, economic, political and legal issues are focussed comprehensively, the desired outcome will not be achieved. It becomes all the more important as the need to identify the marginalised and the expansion of services to reach them cannot be over emphasized. It is important that we move ahead from the welfare approach to the holistic empowerment approach as it is not about doling out services or resources to women, its about their rights as well. The 3-tier convergence forums – district, tehsil and village, below the state level as envisaged in the Mission would expand the outreach and strengthen the accountability mechanism in implementation, she said. She reiterated that the National Mission was an output of the recommendations of the Committee of Governors’.

Haryana Women and Child Development Minister **Smt. Geeta Bhukkal** on the inaugural occasion said that the State Government has been working with a clear vision for the empowerment of women. She said that the benefit of the schemes should reach the real beneficiaries as the aim of the schemes whether of the state or of the Central government is to make the women socially and economically empowered. She also said that the evil of female foeticide is a matter of grave concern and needed introspection. The state government is strictly implementing the Pre conception and Pre Natal Diagnostic Techniques (Prohibition of Sex selection) Act (PCPNDT Act), she added.

Shri Bhupinder Singh Hooda, the Hon’ble Chief Minister of Haryana in his inaugural address said that unless both men and women change their mindset, empowerment of women cannot be achieved just by enacting laws and formulating various schemes for the purpose. He said that the empowerment of women should be adopted and implemented like a mission as the objective could not be achieved without public involvement and participation. Referring to the social evil, female foeticide, he strongly mentioned that it should be condemned by one and all as this was a blot on society.

Elaborating on various schemes being implemented in the state for the empowerment of women, Shri Hooda said Haryana had taken up many initiatives in this regard, as a result of which the sex ratio has improved over the last five years. The state government has allowed two years’ childcare leave to women employees. He said that Rs.31,000 is given to SC families and widows on the marriage of their daughters under the Indira Gandhi Priyadarshini Vivah Shagun Yojana and Rs 11,000 to families having agricultural land of less than 2.5 acres and an annual income of Rs 1 lakh. The government has also reserved 30 per cent seats for girls in technical education institutions and made provisions for concession of 5 single fares per month for girl students of school/colleges and other institutions which are recognised by the State Government or affiliated or associated with any university in Haryana besides the provision for free travelling of women and children below 15 years on the Raksha Bandhan day.



He also released a booklet **Mission Poornashakti...Hum SunegeNari Ki Baat** published by State Women Empowerment Mission, Women and Child Development Department, Haryana.

Smt. Anita Yadav Chief Parliamentary Secretary Anita Yadav, also spoke on the occasion.

Smt. Renu Phuliya thanked the Hon'ble Chief Minister, WCD Minister, and all other officers and NGO representatives, academicians, from the participating states of Haryana, Punjab, J&K, Himachal Pradesh and the UTs of Delhi and Chandigarh for attending the conference.

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